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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00
INRE-00 COME-00 DOTE-00 EB-08 FMC-01 CG-00
DLOS-09 OES-09 ACDA-12 IO-13 /102 W
----------125541 281541Z /45
O R 281503Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY OSLO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6227
INFO SECDEF WASHDC
JCS WASHDC
USDEL MC BTUSSELS
USLOSACLANT NORFOLK
USNMR SHAPE
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE
USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
USNAVEUR LONDON ENG

C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 3639

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MILI, NATO, PEPR, PINT, UR, NO
SUBJECT: SOVIET SHIP INCIDENTS: DECREASED ADRENALIN FLOW

REF: A. OSLO 3586, B. STATE 187973, C. OSLO 3537, D. OSLO 3503,
E. OSLO 3484, F. STATE 179869

1. THE GON'S EFFORT TO MODERATE THE PUBLIC DEBATE ON THE SOVIET SHIP INCURSIONS APPEARS TO BE MEETING WITH SOME SUCCESS. THE CONFIDENTIAL

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FACT THAT NO NEW INCIDENT HAS BEEN REPORTED SINCE JULY 23 HAS HELPED TO SLOW THE MOMENTUM WHICH HAD BEEN PICKING UP WITH EACH NEW ALLEGED SOVIET VIOLATION OF NORWEGIAN WATERS. THE ATMOSPHERE WAS ALSO DECHARGED BY THE INCREASING ABILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT TO CORRAL SOME OF ITS OUTSPOKEN MEMBERS AND TO APPEAR TO SEAK WITH ONE VOICE DELIVERINGTHE SAME MESSAGE IN A MODERATE TONE. THE AURA

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OF CRISIS WAS ALSO SOMEWHAT DISPELLED BY THE CONSCIOUS DECISION
ON THE PART OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER TO
ABSENT THEMSELVES FROM THE JULY 27 CABINET MEETING WHICH CONSIDERED
THE SOVIET SHIPS' INCURSIONS.

2. ACTING FOREIGN AND PRIME MINISTER GJERDE (MINISTER OF
OIL AND ENERGY) MADE A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT AT THE CONCLUSION
OF THE JULY 27 CABINET MEETING WHICH WAS WIDELY CARRIED ON
THE TV, RADIO AND IN THE PRESS. GJERDE SAID THAT VIOLATIONS
OF NORWEGIAN BORDERS WOULD NOT BE TOLERATED AND WOULD BE
MET WITH A FIRM AND CORRECT ATTITUDE.
REFERRING TO LOS MINISTER EVENSEN'S PUBLIC STATEMENT CHARACTER-
IZING THE SOVIET BOAT INCIDENTS AS BREACHES OF FREEPASSAGE
REGULATIONS RATHER THAN AS BORDER VIOLATIONS, GJERDE SAID
THAT THE LOS MINISTER DID NOT MEAN TO IMPLY THAT THE GOVERNMENT
WAS TAKING A SOFTER LINE THAN THAT DRAWN BY THE DEFENSE
AND FOREIGN MINISTERS. FURTHERMORE, HE SAID THERE IS AS
YET NO BASIS FOR REACHING ANY FIRM CONCLUSIONS AS TO THE
POSSIBLE MOTIVES BEHIND THE ALLEGED VIOLATIONS OF NOR-
WEGIAN TERRITORIAL BORDERS BY THE SOVIET SHIPS.

3. EVALUATIONS OF THE POLICE REPORTS ARE BEGINNING TO
BE PUBLICIZED AND ARE ALSO HAVING A CALMING IMPACT. THE
GOVERNMENT HAS NOW DECIDED AS REPORTED IN OSLO'S 3586 THAT ONLY
FOUR OF THE TEN INCIDENTS INVOLVING SOVIET VESSELS REALLY
AUALIFY AS VIOLATIONS OF NORWEGIAN LAW. ADDITIONALLY,
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ON CLOSER EXAMINATION OF PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE JULY 23 INCIDENT
NEAR SOEROEYA, IT WAS FOULD THAT THE MYSTERIOUS EQUIPMENT
BEING LOWERED INTO THE SEA WAS, IN FACT, GARBAGE. IN A
JULY 27 INTERVIEW THOR ERIK JOHANSEN, THE ACTING POLICE
CHIEF OF VARDOE, IS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT HE HIMSELF
WAS NOT CERTAIN AT ALL THAT THE EAST GERMAN SHIP
MANDFELD EARLIER REPORTED AS HAVING VIOLATED NORWEGIAN
WATERS (OSLO'S 3537) HAD INFACT BEEN LYING MOTIONLESS
WHEN OBSERVED (AND THTEREFORE A VIOLATION) AND HAD NOT BEEN
UNDERWAY (NOT A VIOLATION). IN SUM THE FACTS OF
THE INCIDENTS AS THEY ARE BECOMING KNOWN AS DISTINCT FROM
THE EARLIER SPECULATION ARE SERVING TO COOL TEMPERS.

4. THE PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF THE SOVIET SHIP INCURSIONS
IS BEGINNING TO BECOME MORE BALANCED AND TO BE BROUGHT INTO
PERSPECTIVE. WHILE THE NUMBER OF VIOLATIONS AND THE
SERIOUSNESS OF THE SERIES OF INCIDENTS MAY NOW BEGIN TO BE
UNDERSTOOD TO BE LESS MENACING THAN EARLIER THOUGHT, THE
QUESTION OF SOVIET MOTIVES STILL REMAINS. AND THE
NORWEGIAN PUBLIC IN GENERAL IS PROBABLY LEFT WITH
VAGUE FEELINGS OF DISQUIET ABOUT THEIR NORTHERN NEIGHBOR
AND DEFINITE FEELINGS OF DISSATISFACTION WITH THEIR

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GOVERNMENT'S ABILITY TO DEAL AND MANAGE CRISES. THE WINDING DOWN ATMOSPHERE IS OF COURSE ALL PREDICTED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT NO NOW INCIDENT TAKES PLACE.
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Type: TE
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